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Freezing Preserves Victory Foods

Frances Madigan
Iowa State College

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Freezing Preserves Victory Foods

Home freezing scores high as a wartime method of storing fruits and vegetables, says Frances Madigan

EVER alert for variety in the preservation of fruits and vegetables, homemakers will welcome the change which home freezing brings.

In solving the problem of a well-balanced winter diet, many a homemaker will take advantage of her victory garden and of fruits and vegetables from the unrationed market. Fruits which may fill her locker or freezing unit include apricots, rhubarb, cherries, peaches, prunes and a great variety of berries. Vegetables well adapted to freezing are asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and cabbage. Cauliflower, lima beans,

peas, sweet corn, spinach and snap beans are suitable for preservation by freezing.

For retention of natural appearance and unaltered quality of fruits and vegetables, freezing as a method of preservation scores high. Canned or heat-processed foods are easily cooked beyond the requirements for table use, and undesirable changes in texture and especially in color, aroma and taste may occur. If properly conducted, however, preservation by freezing retains the fresh color and flavor of foods better than any other method. (Continued on page 30)

These fresh garden peas will provide variety and valuable nutrients in next winter's meals if they are preserved by freezing. This method insures the retention of the product's color and flavor better than other methods and results in less vitamin destruction



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Freezing Victory Foods

(Continued from page 7)

In selecting fruits and vegetables for freezing, it must be remembered that freezing not only retains the natural appearance of the product but also any defects that may be present. Fruits that are selected for freezing should be firm and fully ripe as well as free from molds and other defects. To meet freezing standards, vegetables must be succulent and tender with no sign of incipient spoilage.

Fruits and vegetables which excel in flavor, are attractive in color and have a pleasing aroma are best adapted for freezing. Since deterioration begins soon after harvesting if the products are kept at ordinary temperatures, speed in preparation for freezing cannot be over-emphasized. If freezing on the day of harvesting is impossible, the products should be kept at temperatures ranging from 32° to 40° F., at a relative humidity of 85 percent, and frozen the following day.

Preparatory to freezing, the material is washed, and decayed or immature pieces are sorted out. Unnecessary handling of delicate fruits is to be avoided.

Scalding of vegetables cannot be omitted since enzymes or ferments in vegetables produce undesirable changes in aroma, taste and sometimes in appearance. These enzymes are rendered inactive by exposure to heat which falls short of imparting a cooked character to the vegetables. Fruits usually do not require scalding or blanching before freezing.

The recommended times for scalding have been carefully worked out for various vegetables and should be followed closely. Scalding time should be as short as possible since vitamin C is easily destroyed by heat. In addition to inactivating enzymes, scalding also brightens the color of the vegetables and softens them slightly, thus making packing more easy.

Commercial blanching of vegetables is accomplished by the use of flowing steam, but for home use boiling water is convenient and more practical.

Important in retaining the natural crispness of vegetables and fruits is the prompt cooling which follows blanching. Cold running water or ice water may be used; the colder the product becomes at this stage, the more rapid will be the freezing in the locker. When the excess water is drained off, the product is ready for packaging.

A sugar sirup pack is recommended for fruits which are to be used for dessert purposes since the usual size and shape of the fruit is more readily retained. Dry sugar tends to draw moisture from the fruit and results in some shrinkage of tissues.

Vegetables may be frozen dry and at present commercially frozen vegetables are preserved without packing liquid. A brine pack, however, protects against dehydration during storage and adds to the keeping qualities when removed from storage.

Containers for frozen foods need not have the hermetic-sealing feature essential for best-processed foods, but the container must offer a high degree of resistance to drying and should be impervious to the passage of water vapor. In addition to well-closed glass jars, a wide variety of cartons specially treated with wax are available. Since freezing results in expansion, any container, especially the glass jar, is not filled to capacity. For storage of frozen-pack foods, a temperature of 0° F. is recommended.